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Kremlin welcomes Olympic tourists — but keeps them at arm's length

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Moscow

As Soviet runners carry the Olympic flame steadily toward Moscow for the opening ceremony of the games July 19, the Kremlin combines defensiveness at home with a mixture of initiatives and watchfulness abroad.

Moscow would like to appear as an open-hearted champion of goodwill and peace at home and around the world as the games open in less than two weeks in Lenin stadium before 100,000 spectators and a global television audience.

Yet the Soviet Union's own traditional suspicion of outsiders — even of the Olympic tourists it wants to impress — has led it to issue a new warning to its own people to stay away from tourists.

And it remains concerned at a variety of crisis areas from Europe to Asia, treating them with diplomacy both old and new. Its most dramatic move has been apparently to drop preconditions to talks with the United States on limiting medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. But it stands fast on its troop presence in Afghanistan, and détente with the US remains frozen.

The fresh warning to Soviet citizens came on television July 6. Shown was an hour-long film that alleged to reveal a secret CIA plan for 1976-81 including espionage, ideological sabotage, and subversion against the USSR.

It singled out émigré organizations, alleging they had been in touch with the CIA to prepare to smuggle in and distribute anti-Soviet literature. It showed reconstructed incidents in which it said tourists had tried to

smuggle in Jewish literature in secret compartments of automobiles.

Viewers were also warned against US correspondents, and the photo of a former New York Times bureau chief (Christopher Wren, now in Cairo) was shown.

The number of Western tourists expected here for the games has dropped from 125,000 to fewer than 40,000 because of the boycott movement. But third-world and communist countries are sending tens of thousands of tourists, reviving Kremlin memories of the 1957 youth festival in which some 30,000 young people spread Western ideas and laid the basis for organized dissent years later.

Meanwhile Moscow has confirmed it is ready to open talks with the US on limiting medium-range missiles in Europe, although it stipulates that no agreement can go into force before the SALT II treaty is signed.

The US is ready to consider the Soviet offer, which drops an earlier precondition that NATO must cancel or suspend its Dec. 12 decision last year to station 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe from late 1983.

Pravda July 6 repeated familiar allegations that the US, China, and Egypt are training and arming Afghan rebels in Pakistan.

The Soviets are angry at criticism of their Afghan policies from Iran and at the expulsion of a senior Soviet official from Tehran.

Elsewhere, Moscow supports Vietnam, its main Asian ally, against Thai charges of Vietnamese aggression from Cambodia. The Kremlin also watches carefully China's latest encirclement move — preparing to open full ties between the Chinese and Spanish Communist Parties after having resumed similar ties with the Italian party earlier this year.